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The Case of the Century

During the 1900’s racism was taking a toll on African Americans more than ever. There were different water fountains for African American people and white people. African Americans were denied the right to vote. They weren’t allowed to sit where they wanted or even be themselves. But most importantly, they weren’t allowed to attend school with white people, also known as segregation. Though “separate but equal” had been established, the schools truly were not equal. African American schools were more cramped. The schools would have fewer books, in worse shape, and the condition of the schools was awful compared to white schools. In the case, Brown vs. Board of Education, Oliver Brown sued the Board of Education for denying his daughter, Linda Brown the right to attend the white school near his house. Brown vs. Board of Education ended segregation once and for all.

Though many people had sued the Board of Education, Oliver Brown was the one who stood up and took charge. Oliver Brown was an African American man who lived in Kansas. He had a child named Linda Brown. He was part of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). This organization was trying to improve schools for African American students. Before Brown vs. Board of Education, African Americans had to attend different schools than white people. By the time Brown vs. Board Education occurred, many states had created cases against the Board of Education. In the actual case, five states were part of it. The cases for segregation were from the states Kansas, Delaware, District of Columbia, South Carolina, and Virginia. All the states cases’ were collaboratively named Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas. Although racism was a huge part of the case, the Supreme Court only ruled the segregation laws unconstitutional. Even after the case, racism was still huge amongst white people.

With the assistance of the NAACP, Oliver Brown fought for his daughter’s right to attend a white school. Three years before the Brown vs. Board of Education case decision took place, the actual case started. Brown and the organization argued that segregation sent the message that white’s were somehow inferior. They believed that due to this thought, the “separate but equal” schools would never be truly equal. The Board of Education refused to give in. They stated that segregation was only preparing African American children for the rest of their lives. They listed famous African Americans who had influenced society for the rest of time without attending integrated schools. Seeing as the example set by Plessy vs. Ferguson made it hard for them to issue the request. They therefore voted in favor of the Board of Education. Brown vs. Board of Education was appealed and went to the United States Supreme Court. Combined with the cases from Delaware, Virginia, and South Carolina, the case was stronger. They thought of it as violating the Fourteenth Amendment but did not arrive at a decision. Thurgood Marshall, the first African American Supreme Court Justice, fought for Brown and his case. On May 17, 1954, after three years of waiting, the Supreme Court declared segregation unconstitutional. Oliver Brown and the NAACP’s hard work had paid off after three long years of waiting for the Supreme Court to issue a decision.